



*Representatives*  
**Glenn Anderson**  
 and  
**Jay Rodne**

# 5<sup>th</sup> Legislative District Survey

## Contact us

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Higher Education, *Ranking Member*

Capital Budget

Education Appropriations

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Judiciary, *Ranking Member*

Transportation, *Asst. Ranking Member*

Financial Institutions and Insurance

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1-800-635-9993

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

The 2010 legislative session is scheduled to begin Jan. 11. The impact of the "Great Recession" has significantly damaged our state's economy and budget. It is clear the Legislature will have to grapple with at least an additional \$2.6 billion budget deficit on top of the \$9.1 billion shortfall partially addressed in the 2009 legislative session.

A cumulative \$11.7 billion budget deficit in such a short period (18 months) is creating a "California-style" budget implosion that is collapsing our state budget. It is anticipated the 2011-13 budget will also have a \$5-7 billion continuing shortfall. This means state spending will have to be reduced by at least 33 percent beginning now to balance the budget and align with available tax revenue.

We know these large numbers for government spending can be numbing, can be hard to connect to pressing household issues and are always suspect. However, this upcoming legislative session will be a decisive moment that determines the future prosperity of our state. Either the Legislature will deal with some very large, controversial issues and resolve them, or continue with "business as usual." Kicking our budget problems (especially of this size) into the future makes them far worse.

Your input on this situation is critical. We hope you will take a few minutes to answer this survey and return your responses to us. For your convenience, the questionnaire is also available online. Simply go to either of our legislative Web pages ([www.houserepublicans.wa.gov/Anderson](http://www.houserepublicans.wa.gov/Anderson) or [www.houserepublicans.wa.gov/Rodne](http://www.houserepublicans.wa.gov/Rodne)) and click on the "survey" link to complete it. There are additional survey questions on the electronic site that could not be included here due to space limitations and to make it easier for you to make comments.

Together, we can overcome any challenge. We believe common-sense solutions are non-partisan. Our commitment to you, as your state representatives, is to work as bipartisan problem-solvers, to address issues squarely and negotiate the best possible long-term outcomes for our communities.

Your insight is incredibly helpful as we sort through the thousands of bill proposals we see every year. It is your government and your participation makes it work better.

We look forward to your responses to this questionnaire and encourage your feedback year-round.

Best regards,

  
 Rep. Glenn Anderson

  
 Rep. Jay Rodne

# Rep. Anderson • Rep. Rodne



## K-12 Education:

There are about one million students in our state's K-12 public school system. According to U.S. Census data, Washington students are less educated than their parents. Less than 40 percent of high school graduates have an 8<sup>th</sup>-grade proficiency in math and science. However, schools in our legislative district perform better than the state average.

Last session, the Legislature passed House Bill 2261 to reform the state's K-12 public school system to improve academic performance and accountability. It is estimated the measure will cost \$4-6 billion to implement, which will be phased in over the next eight years. The goal is to bring our state's school system up to globally competitive academic standards. Teacher compensation makes up roughly 80 percent of these potential future costs.

**Should the basis for teacher compensation be focused on length of employment service or an independently proven and validated assessment of teacher content knowledge, classroom skills and student achievement?**

- ☐ Length of employment
- ☐ Proven content knowledge, classroom skills and student achievement



## Higher Education:

Achieving a college two- or four-year degree is an important way to increase individual income earning potential over a lifetime. During an economic downturn many individuals return to college to gain specialized degrees or earn advanced degrees to improve opportunities for new employment.

As part of last session's budget deficit reduction package, universities were given the authority to almost double student tuition, yet no reforms to improve class/program availability to students or budget management transparency for universities were implemented.

**Should university tuition be capped by the state at the cost of inflation or should universities be given unlimited authority to set tuition and fees?**

- ☐ Cap tuition at the rate of inflation
- ☐ Give universities unlimited tuition and fee-setting authority



## Ports:

Ports, and the transportation networks (air, rail, marine and road) that support them, are the heart of regions that are economically competitive in global exports, which helps provide a higher standard of prosperity for citizens. Puget Sound is the natural "gateway" for international trade between China/Pacific Rim and North America.

Over the last decade Puget Sound's port competitiveness, and supporting infrastructure, have significantly declined. The ports of our northern Canadian neighbor, the province of British Columbia, are considered much more competitive than Washington State ports. Ports in our state are supported primarily by property tax levies that do not require a public vote.

**What do you think should be done to make our state's ports more cost effective and efficient for the many sectors that export Washington goods around the world?**

- ☐ The individual Ports of Seattle, Tacoma and Everett should be merged into one to provide better value to property tax payers and be more globally competitive to attract new jobs to our state
- ☐ The individual ports should be left separate to compete amongst themselves for new business, even if it costs more to the taxpayer



## Unemployment Insurance:

Unemployment insurance (UI) was created during the 1930s Great Depression to provide temporary relief for unemployed workers looking for new jobs. It was meant to stabilize the economy in challenging times, which would benefit everyone. Currently, UI is 100 percent paid for by taxes on all employers. However, in tough economic times the high level of UI taxes on employers, especially small and mid-size companies, can actually encourage layoffs and slow down creation of new jobs.

**In order to stimulate new job creation and retention in our state, should the state split the cost of UI benefit funding evenly with employers, phasing it in over the next four years?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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## State Employee Pensions:

State and local government employees receive pension benefits as part of their compensation package. These are contractual liabilities the state must pay,

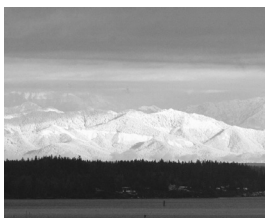
regardless of the economy. In the next 10 years about half of all state employees will be eligible for retirement.

Over the last decade, the state has borrowed from state pension funds to pay for new and existing program operations. Currently, the state is only contributing 25 percent of its fiscal obligation to the pension system. Additionally, the investment returns generated by the State Investment Board to pay for pensions dropped 27 percent due to the market crash of the "Great Recession."

The state actuary has determined to meet the state's pension obligation it will require the state to make an additional financial contribution of \$1.6 billion, in addition to current funds, in every state budget for the next decade or it will not be able to pay its employee retirement obligations. The assumed annual state revenue growth rate, for a healthy economy, is about 5 percent or \$1.6 billion.

**It is clear that economic growth will not be enough to cover anticipated costs to fund these pension obligations. What should the state do? [Rank your top two choices]**

- ☐ Cut education spending and put the dollars toward pension solvency
- ☐ Cut social services and health care spending and put the dollars toward pension solvency
- ☐ Raise existing taxes and put the dollars toward pension solvency
- ☐ Institute a new tax dedicated solely to paying off state employee pension contracts



## Environment Legislation:

Environmental conservation and protection is a defining characteristic of our Pacific Northwest quality-of-life. Governor Gregoire has been very

aggressive in pushing her "green agenda," which has included three new government agencies: Puget Sound Partnership, Western Climate Initiative and Climate Action Team. The goal is to combat Washington's impact on climate change by taxing emissions of companies of all sizes and taxing both individual and commercial drivers on the number of miles traveled.

Washington State emits three-tenths of 1 percent of all global emissions and is one of the cleanest states in the nation.

An independent analysis calculated the total cost to families for these carbon-reduction measures would be \$161 billion in 2020, which is \$1,870 annually for a family of four. As more restrictions kick in, that number increases to \$6,800 per family of four by 2035.

**Considering this information, do you support Washington State's and the federal government's efforts to combat climate change through a cap-and-trade system, even if such efforts result in higher energy costs and utility bills for Washington families?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

## Federal Bailout:



As part of the state budget deficit reduction package passed last session, the state received over \$3.5 billion in federal state bailout/stimulus money. This federal funding was provided, in part, by borrowing money from foreign creditors, especially China. This funding was used to pay for on-

going state expenditures, but will have to be paid back by our children. It has been suggested that a second federal bailout/stimulus package should be requested by our state to prevent very large cuts in state spending and/or tax increases.

**What do you believe the state should do?**

- ☐ Seek an additional federal bailout/stimulus package, even if it obligates our children to foreign creditors in the near and far future
- ☐ Refuse additional federal bailout/stimulus dollars and take responsibility to make the tough and necessary spending and taxing decisions based on our priorities

## Health Care:

Washington State has incrementally enacted numerous mandates and restrictions on health care plans over the last 16 years, which have curtailed competition and increased the cost of health insurance. Congress is now considering a government-run health care program, subsidized with tax hikes and Medicare cuts, which will create a universal care model — similar to the Canadian health care system. Health care options through Medicare for seniors would be reduced and individuals not choosing to carry a personal health insurance policy would be subject to a regular penalty fee paid to the government.



# Rep. Anderson • Rep. Rodne

Recently, the Canadian federal government reported it would cut funding for more than 6,000 necessary surgeries due to budget shortfalls. Many worry a government-run health care plan in the United States would be more about accounting than the quality of health care, which is currently happening in the Canadian health care system.

**Do you support a government-run health care system in the United States?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

## Better or Worse:

**Is your individual or family financial condition better or worse than two years ago?**

- ☐ Better  
☐ About the same  
☐ Worse

## Right/Wrong Direction:

**Overall, our state is going in which direction?**

- ☐ Right direction  
☐ Wrong direction

## Additional comments:

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